



STATE OF MICHIGAN

**Family  
Independence  
Agency**

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DOUGLAS E. HOWARD, Director

# News Release

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## FIA Director Honors Branch County Woman

COLDWATER—The director of the Michigan Family Independence Agency (FIA), Douglas E. Howard, presented the agency's statewide Achiever of the Month award to Connie Kramer of Coldwater during a ceremony held at the Branch County FIA office in Coldwater.

This single mother of one child was selected to receive the February award because of her determination to become independent of the welfare system despite significant barriers to her success.

Ms. Kramer first turned to the FIA for assistance in 1995. Through the Branch County office she received Family Independence Program and Food Assistance Program benefits and Medicaid off and on for several years to help provide for her family.

In 1998, Connie left Michigan and moved south in search of opportunities to make a better life. Unfortunately, in 1999 while in Florida, Connie was in a serious auto accident. After her recovery she decided to return to Michigan.

(more)



JOHN ENGLER, Governor

Although Connie was unemployed, she was determined to be successful and committed to doing whatever was necessary to improve living conditions for her family. In September 1999, Connie applied to the Branch County FIA office for assistance. She received Medicaid and Food Assistance benefits (formerly called food stamps) to help make ends meet.

In September Connie was also referred to the Work First program. At her Work First orientation at the Michigan Works! Service Center she was informed that the agency had a job opening. She applied for the position and was hired part-time as a resume writer. In May 2000, she was selected to be the service center's transportation coordinator and became a full-time employee.

To support her work efforts the Branch County FIA provided child day care assistance. The Michigan Works! Service Center also helped by supplying Connie with the funds to pay for car insurance, license plates and auto repairs. To help her with her living arrangements she received the funds she needed to put a deposit on an apartment from Coldwater Christian Services.

Since, January 2000, the only services Connie has received from FIA is child day care. For several years she has provided for her household with the earnings she has received through her employment at the Michigan Works! Service Center.

Connie was selected to receive the February 2002 Achiever of the Month award because of her positive attitude, commitment to improve conditions for her family, and determined efforts to achieve independence from the welfare system.

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